

Roping Lions in the Grand Canyon

By Zane Grey

With Photographs by the Author

While we were pitching camp among magnificent pine trees, and above a hollow where a heavy bank of snow still lay, a sudden pounding in the turf attracted our attention.

"Hold the horses!" yelled Emmett.

As we all made a dive among our snorting and plunging horses the sound seemed to be coming right into camp. In a moment I saw a string of wild horses thundering by. A noble black stallion led them, and as he ran with beautiful stride he curved his fine head backward to look at us, and whistled his wild challenge.

Later a herd of large white-tailed deer trooped up the hollow. The Navajo grew much excited and wanted me to shoot, and when Emmett told him we had not come out to kill, he looked dumfounded. Even the Indian felt it a strange departure from the usual mode of hunting to travel and climb hundreds of miles over hot desert and rock-ribbed canyons, to camp at last in a spot so wild that deer were tame as cattle, and then not kill.

called the Bay. The three important canyons opened into it. From the Bay, the south rim was regular and impassable all the way round to the narrow Saddle, which connected it to the mainland.

"Now then," said Jones, when we assured him that we were pretty well informed as to the important features, "you can readily see our advantage. The plateau is about nine or ten miles long, and six wide at its widest. We can't get lost, at least for long. We know where lions can go over the rim and we'll head them off, make short-cut chases, something new in lion hunting. We are positive the lions cannot get over the second wall, except where we came up, at the Saddle. In regard to lion signs, I'm doubtful of the evidence of my own eyes. This is virgin ground. No white man or Indian has ever hunted lions here. We have stumbled on a lion home, the breeding place of hundreds of lions that infest the north rim of the canyon."

The old plainsman struck a big fist into the palm of his hand, a rare action with him. Jim lifted his broad hat and ran his fingers through his white hair. In Emmett's clear desert-eagle eyes shone a furtive, anxious look, which yet could not overshadow the smoldering fire.

"If only we don't kill the horses!" he said.

More than anything else that remark from such a man thrilled me with its subtle suggestion. He loved those beautiful horses. What wild rides he saw in his mind's eye! In cold calculation we perceived the wonderful possibilities never before experienced by hunters, and as the wild spell clutched us my last bar of restraint let down.

During supper we talked incessantly, and afterward around the camp-fire. Twilight fell with the dark shadows sweeping under the silent pines; the night wind rose and began its moan.

"Shore there's some scent on the wind," said Jim, lighting his pipe with a red ember. "See how onerous Don is."

The hound raised his fine, dark head and repeatedly sniffed the air, then walked to and fro as if on guard for his pack. Moze growled at one of the pups. Sounder was sleepy, but he watched Don with suspicious eyes. The other hounds, mature



Left—Which is the Pinet?
Below—Jones, Emmett and the
Navajo with three lions



Nothing could have and somber, lay stretched before the fire.

I

THE Grand Canyon of Arizona is over two hundred miles long, thirteen wide, and a mile and a half deep; a titanic gorge in which mountains, tablelands, chasms and cliffs lie half veiled in purple haze. It is wild and sublime; a thing of wonder, of mystery; beyond all else a place to grip the heart of a man, to unleash his daring spirit.

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On April 20, 1908, after days on the hot desert, my weary party and pack-train reached the summit of Powell's Plateau, the most isolated, inaccessible and remarkable mesa of any size in all the canyon country. Cut off from the mainland it appeared insurmountable; standing aloof from the towers and escarpments, rugged and bold in outline, its forest covering like a strip of black velvet, its giant granite walls gold in the sun, it seemed apart from the world, haunting with its beauty, isolation and wild promise.

The members of my party harmoniously fitted the scene. Buffalo Jones, burly-shouldered, hyonze-faced, and grim, proved in his appearance what a lifetime on the plains could make of a man. Emmett was a Mormon, a massively built grey-bearded son of the desert; he had lived his life on it; he had conquered it and in his falcon eyes shone all its fire and freedom. Ranger Jim Owens had the wiry, supple body and careless, tidy garb of the cowboy, and the watchful gaze, quiet face and locked lips of the frontiersman. The fourth member was a Navajo Indian, a copper-skinned, raven-haired, beady-eyed desert savage.

I had told Emmett to hire some one who could put the horses on grass in the evening and then find them the next morning. In northern Arizona this required more than genius. Emmett secured the best trailer of the desert Navajos. Jones hated an Indian; and Jim, who carried an ounce of lead somewhere in his person, associated this painful addition to his weight with an unfriendly Apache, and swore all Indians should be dead. So between the two, Emmett and I had trouble in keeping our Navajo from illustrating the plainsman idea of a really good Indian—a dead one.

Buffalo Jones with Souder and Ranger



Nothing could have pleased me better, incident to the settling into permanent camp. The wild horses and tame deer added the all-satisfying touch to the background of forest, flowers and mighty pines and sunlit patches of grass, the white tents and red blankets, the sleeping hounds and blazing fire-logs all making a picture like that of a hunter's dream.

"Come, saddle up," called the never restful Jones. "Leave the Indian in camp with the hounds, and we'll get the lay of the land." All afternoon we spent riding the plateau. What a wonderful place! We were completely bewildered with its physical properties, and surprised at the abundance of wild horses and mustangs, deer, coyotes, foxes, grouse, and other birds, and overjoyed to find innumerable lion trails. When we returned to camp I drew a rough map, which Jones laid flat on the ground as he called us around him.

"Now, boys, let's get our heads together." In shape the plateau resembled the ace of clubs. The center and side wings were high and well wooded with heavy pines; the middle wing was longest, sloped west, had no pine, but a dense growth of cedar. Numerous ridges and canyons cut up this central wing. Middle Canyon, the longest and deepest, bisected the plateau, headed near camp, and ran parallel with two smaller ones, which we named Right and Left Canyons. These three were lion runways and hundreds of deer carcasses lined the thickets. North Hollow was the only depression, as well as runway, on the northwest rim. West Point formed the extreme western cape of the plateau. To the left of West Point was a deep cut-in of the rim wall,

and somber, lay stretched before the fire.

"Tie them up, Jim," said Jones, "and let's turn in."

II

WHEN I awakened next morning the sound of Emmett's ax rang out sharply. Little streaks of light from the camp-fire played between the flaps of the tent. I saw old Moze get up and stretch himself. A jangle of cowbells from the forest told me we would not have to wait for the horses that morning.

"The Injun's all right," Jones remarked to Emmett.

"All rustle for breakfast," called Jim.

We ate in the semi-darkness with the gray shadow ever brightening. Dawn broke as we saddled our horses. The pups were limber, and ran to and fro on their chains, scenting the air; the older hounds stood quietly waiting.

"Come Navy—come chase cougie," said Emmett.

"No!" replied the Indian.

"Let him keep camp," suggested Jim.

"All right; but he'll eat us out," Emmett declared.

"Climb up you fellows," said Jones, impatiently. "Have I got everything—rope, chains, collars, wire, nippers? Yes, all right. Hyar, you lazy dogs—out of this!"

We rode abreast down the ridge. "The demeanor of the hounds contrasted sharply with what it had been at the start of the hunt the year before. Then they had been eager, uncertain, violent; they did not know what was in the air; now they filed after Don in an orderly trot.

We struck out of the pines at half-past five. Floating mist hid the lower end of the plateau. The morning had a cool touch but there was no frost. Crossing Middle Canyon about halfway down we jogged on. Cedar trees began to show bright green against the soft gray sage. We were nearing the dark line of the cedar forest, when Jim, who led, beld up his hand in a warning check. We closed in around him.

"Watch Don," he said.

The hound stood stiff, head well up, nose working, and the hair on his back bristling. All the other hounds whined and kept close to him.

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"Don scent a lion," whispered Jim. "I've never known him to do that unless there was the scent of a lion on the wind."

"Hunt 'em up, Don, old boy," called Jones. The pack commenced to work back and forth along the ridge. We reared a hollow when Don barked eagerly. Sounder answered and likewise Jude. Moe's short angry, "Bow-wow" showed the old gladiator to be in line.

"Ranger's gone," cried Jim. "He was farthest ahead. I'll bet he's struck it. We'll know in a minute, for we're close."

The hounds were tearing through the sage, working harder and harder, calling and answering one another, all the time getting down into the hollow.

Don suddenly let out a string of yelps. I saw him, running head up, pass into the cedars like a yellow dart. Sounder howled his deep, full bay, and led the rest of the pack up the slope in angry clamor.

"They're off!" yelled Jim, and so were we.

In less than a minute we had lost one another. Crashings among the dry cedars, thud of hoofs and yells kept me going in one direction. The fiery burst of the hounds had surprised me. I remembered that Jim had said Emmett and his charger might keep the pack in sight, but that none of the rest of us could.

IT DID not take me long to realize what my mustang was made of. His name was Foxie, which suited him well. He carried me at a fast pace on the trail of someone, and he seemed to know that by keeping in this trail part of the work of breaking through the brush was already done for him. Nevertheless, the sharp dead branches, more numerous in a cedar forest than elsewhere, struck and stung us as we passed. We climbed a ridge, and found the cedars thinning out into open patches. Then we faced a bare slope of sage and I saw Emmett below on his big horse.

Foxie bolted down this slope, hurling the bunches of sage, and showing the speed of which Emmett had boasted. The open ground, with its brush, rock and gullies, was easy going for the little mustang. I heard nothing save the wind singing in my ears. Emmett's trail, plain in the yellow ground, showed me the way. On entering the cedars again I pulled Foxie in and stopped twice to yell "wa-hoo!" I heard the baying of the hounds, but no answer to my signal. Then I attended to the stern business of catching up. For what seemed a long time, I threaded the maze of cedar, galloped the open sage flats, always on Emmett's track.

A signal cry, sharp to the right, turned me. I answered, and with the exchange of signal cries found my way into a glade where Jones and Jim awaited me.

"Here's one," said Jim. "Emmett must be with the hounds. Listen."

With the labored breathing of the horses filling our ears we could hear no other sound. Dismounting, I went aside and turned my ear to the breeze.

"I hear Don," I cried instantly.

"Which way?" both men

horse with a big man doubled over his saddle. The onslaught of Emmett and his desert charger stirred a fear in me that checked admiration.

"Hounds running wild," he yelled, and the dark shadows of the cedars claimed him again.

A hundred yards within the forest we came again upon Emmett, dismounted, searching the ground. Moe and Sounder were with him, apparently at fault. Suddenly Moe left the little glade and venting his sullen, quick bark, disappeared under the trees. Sounder sat on his haunches and yelped.

"What's wrong?" growled Jones, tumbling off his saddle.

"Shore something is," said Jim, also dismounting.

"Here's a lion track," interposed Emmett.

"Hat! and here's another," cried Jones, in great satisfaction.

"That's the trail we were on, and here's another crossing it at right angles. Both are fresh; one isn't fifteen minutes old."

Don and Jude have split one way and Moe another. By George, that's great of Sounder to hang fire!"

"Put him on the fresh trail," said Jim, vaulting into his saddle. Jones complied, with the result that we saw Sounder start off on the trail Moe had taken. All of us got in some pretty hard riding, and managed to stay within earshot of Sounder.

We crossed a canyon, and presently reached another which, from its depth, must have been Middle Canyon. Sounder did not climb the opposite slope, so we followed the rim. From a bare ridge we distinguished the line of pines above us, and decided that our location was in about the center of the plateau.

Very little time elapsed before we heard Moe. Sounder had caught up with him. We came to a halt where the canyon widened and was not so deep, with cliffs and cedars opposite us, and an easy slope leading down. Sounder bayed incessantly; Moe emitted harsh, eager howls, and both hounds, in plain sight, began working in circles.

"The lion has gone up somewhere," cried Jim. "Look sharp!"

Repeatedly Moe worked to the edge of a low wall of stone and looked over; then he barked and ran back to the slope, only to return. When I saw him slide down a steep place, make for the bottom of the stone wall, and jump into the low branches of a cedar I knew where to look. Then I described the lion, a round yellow ball, cunningly curled up in a mass of dark branches. He had leaped into the tree from the wall.

"There he is! Treed! Treed!" I yelled. "Moe has found him."

"Down boys, down into the canyon," shouted Jones, in a sharp voice. "Make a racket, we don't want him to jump."

How he and Jim and Emmett rolled and cracked the stone! For a moment I could not get off my horse; I was chained to my saddle by a strange vacillation that could have been no other thing than fear.

"Are you afraid?" called Jones from below.

"Yes, but I am coming," I replied, and dismounted to plunge down the hill. It may have been shame or anger that dominated me then; whatever it was I made directly for the cedar, and did not halt until I was under the snarling lion.

"Not too close!" warned Jones. "He might jump. It's a Tom, a two-year-old, and full of fight."

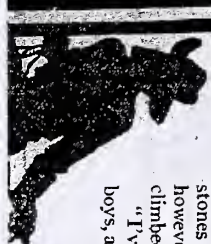
It did not matter to me then whether he jumped or not. I knew I had to be cured of my dread, and the sooner it was done the better.

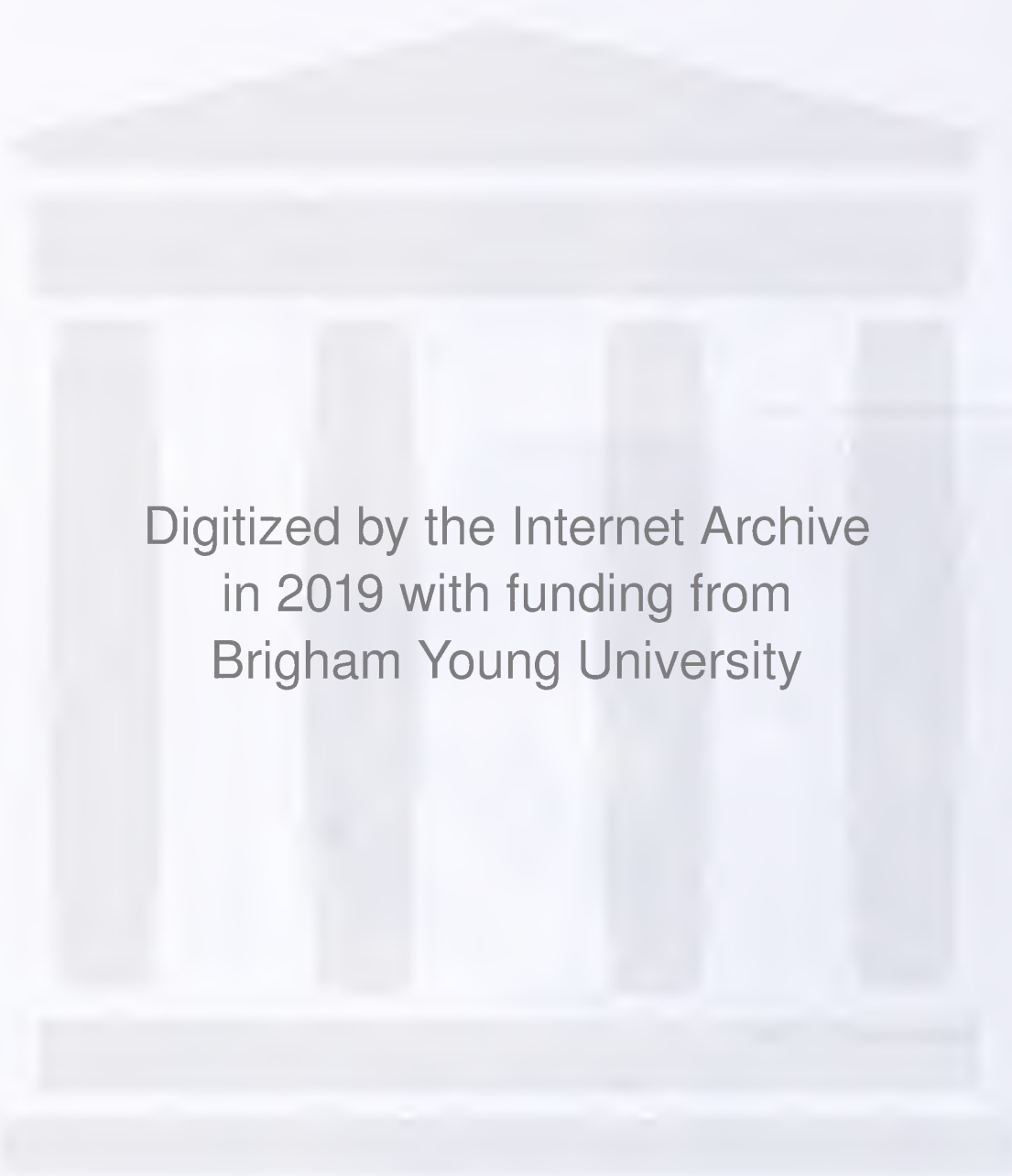
Old Moe had already climbed a third of the distance up to the lion.

"Hyar Moe! Out of there, you fescal coon chaser!" Jones yelled as he threw stones and sticks at the hound. Moe, however, replied with his snarly bark and climbed on steadily.

"I've got to pull him out. Watch close, boys, and tell me if the lion starts down."

When Jones climbed a few branches of the tree, Tom let out an ominous growl. "Make ready to jump."





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With the labored breathing of the horses filling our ears we could hear no other sound. Dismounting, I went aside and turned my ear to the breeze.

"I hear Don," I cried instantly.

"Which way?" both men asked.

"West."

"Strange," said Jones. "The hound wouldn't split, would he, Jim?"

"Don leave that hot trail? Shore he wouldn't," replied Jim. "But his runnin' do seem queer this mornin'."

"The breeze is freshening," I said. "There! Now listen! Don, and Sounder, too."

The baying came closer and closer. Our horses threw up long ears. It was hard to sit still and wait. At a quick cry from Jim we saw Don cross the lower end of the flat.

No need to spur our mounts! The lifting of bridles served, and away we raced. Foxie passed the others in short order. Don had long disappeared, but with blended bays, Jude, Moze, and Sounder broke out of the cedars hot on the trail. They, too, were out of sight in a moment.

The crash of breaking brush and thunder of hoofs from where the hounds had come out of the forest, attracted and even frightened me. I saw the green of a low cedar tree shake, and split, to let out a huge, gaunt



anger. That dominated me then; whatever it was I made directly for the cedar, and did not halt until I was under the snaring lion.

"Not too close!" warned Jones. "He might jump. It's a Tom, a two-year-old, and full of fight." It did not matter to me then whether he jumped or not. I knew I had to be cured of my dread, and the sooner it was done the better.

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"Hyar Moze! Out of there, you rascal coon chaser!" Jones yelled as he threw stones and sticks at the hound. Moze, however, replied with his snarly bark and climbed on steadily.

"I've got to pull him out. Watch close, boys, and tell me if the lion starts down." When Jones climbed a few branches of the tree, Tom let out an ominous growl. "Make wady to jump. Shore he's comin'," called Jim.

THE lion, snarling viciously, started to descend. It was a ticklish moment for all of us, particularly Jones. Warily he backed down.

"Boys, maybe he's bluffing," said Jones. "Try him out. Grab sticks and run at the tree and yell, as if you were going to kill him."

Not improbably the demonstration we executed under the tree would have frightened even an African lion. Tom hesitated, showed his white fangs, returned to his first perch, and from there climbed as far as he could. The forked branch on which he stood swayed alarmingly.

"Here, punch Moze out," said Jim, handing up a long pole.

The old hound hung like a leech to the tree, making it difficult to dislodge him. At length he fell heavily, and attempting his thick battle cry, Jim seized him, made him fast to the rope with which Sounder had already been tied.

(Continued on page 42)



Above—Jones about to lasso a mountain lion
Below—Securing a captive for transportation to camp

Roping Lions in the Grand Canyon

(Continued from page 3)

"Say, Emmett, I've no chance here," called Jones. "You try to throw at him from the rock."

Emmett ran up the rock, coiled his lasso and cast the noose. It sailed perfectly in between the branches and circled Tom's head. Before it could be slipped tight he had thrown it off. Then he hid behind the branches.

"I'm going farther up," said Jones.

"Be quick," yelled Jim.

Jones evidently had that in mind. When he reached the middle fork of the cedar, he stood erect and extended the noose of his lasso on the point of his pole. Tom, with a hiss and snap, struck at it savagely. The second trial tempted the lion to saw the rope with his teeth. In a flash Jones withdrew the pole, and lifted a loop of the slack rope over the lion's ears.

"Pull!" he yelled.

Emmett, at the other end of the lasso, threw his great strength into action, pulling the lion out with a crash, and giving the cedar such a tremendous shaking that Jones lost his footing and fell heavily.

Thrilling as the moment was, I had to laugh, for Jones came up out of a cloud of dust, as angry as a wet hornet, and made prodigious leaps to get out of the reach of the whirling lion.

"Look out!" he bawled.

Tom, certainly none the worse for his tumble, made three leaps, two at Jones, one at Jim, which was checked by the short length of the rope in Emmett's hands. Then for a moment, a thick cloud of dust enveloped the wrestling lion, during which the quick-witted Jones tied the free end of the lasso to a sapling.

"Dod gash the luck!" yelled Jones, reaching for another lasso. "I didn't mean for you to pull him out of the tree. Now he'll get loose or kill himself."

When the dust cleared away, we discovered our prize stretched out at full length and frothing at the mouth. As Jones approached, the lion began a series of evolutions so rapid as to be almost indiscernible to the eye. I saw a wheel of dust and yellow fur. Then came a thud and the lion lay inert.

Jones pounced upon him and loosed the lasso around his neck.

"I think he's done for, but maybe not. He's breathing yet. Here, help me tie his paws together. Look out! He's coming to!"

The lion stirred and raised his head. Jones ran the loop of the second lasso around the two hind paws and stretched the lion out. While in this helpless position and with no strength and hardly any breath left in him the lion was easy to handle. With Emmett's help Jones quickly clipped the sharp claws, tied the four paws together, took off the neck lasso and substituted a collar and chain.

"There, that's one. He'll come to all right," said Jones. "But we are lucky. Emmett, never pull another lion clear out of a tree. Pull him over a limb and hang him there while

I was level with the lion, too close for comfort, but in excellent position for taking pictures.

The lion, not heeding me, peered down at Jones, between widespread paws. I could hear nothing except the hounds. Jones's gray hat came pushing up between the dead snags; then his burly shoulders. The quivering muscles of the lion gathered tense, and his lithe body crouched low on the branches. He was about to jump. His open dripping jaws, his wild eyes, roving in terror for some means of escape, his tufted tail, swinging against the twigs and breaking them, manifested his extremity. The eager hounds waited below, howling, leaping.

It bothered me considerably to keep my balance, regulate my camera and watch the proceedings. Jones climbed on with his rope between his teeth, and a long stick. The very next instant, it seemed to me, I heard the cracking of branches and saw the lion biting hard at the noose which circled his neck.

Here I swung down, branch to branch, and dropped to the ground, for I wanted to see what went on below. Above the howls and yelps, I distinguished Jones's yell. Emmett ran directly under the lion with a spread noose in his hands. Jones pulled and pulled, but the lion held on firmly. Throwing the end of the lasso down to Jim, Jones yelled again, and then they both pulled. The lion was too strong. Suddenly, however, the branch broke, letting the lion fall, kicking frantically with all four paws. Emmett grasped one of the four whipping paws, and even as the powerful animal sent him staggering he dexterously left the noose fast on the paw. Jim and Jones in unison let go of their lasso, which streaked up through the branches as the lion fell, and then it dropped to the ground, where Jim made a flying grab for it. Jones plunging out of the tree fell upon the rope at the same instant.

If the action up to then had been fast, it was slow to what followed. It seemed impossible for two strong men with one lasso, and a giant with another, to straighten out that lion. He was all over the little space under the trees at once. The dust flew, the sticks snapped, the gravel pattered like shot against the cedars. Jones ploughed the ground flat on his stomach, holding on with one hand, with the other trying to fasten the rope to something; Jim went to his knees; and on the other side of the lion, Emmett's huge bulk tipped a sharp angle, and then fell.

I shouted and ran forward, having no idea what to do, but Emmett rolled backward, at the same instant the other men got a strong haul on the lion. Short as that moment was in which the lasso slackened, it sufficed for Jones to make the rope fast to a tree. Whereupon with the three men pulling on the other side of the leaping lion, somehow I had flashed into my mind the game that children play called

angry as a wet nornet, and made promiscuous leaps to get out of the reach of the whirling lion. "Look out!" he bawled.

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"There, that's one. He'll come to all right," said Jones. "But we are lucky. Emmett, never pull another lion clear out of a tree. Pull him over a limb and hang him there while some one below ropes his hind paws. That's the only way, and if we don't stick to it, somebody is going to get done for. Come, now, we'll leave this fellow here and hunt up Don and Jude. They've treed another lion by this time."

Remarkable to me was to see how, as soon as the lion lay helpless, Sounder lost his interest. Moze growled, yet readily left the spot. Before we reached the level, both hounds had disappeared.

"Hear that?" yelled Jones, digging spurs into his horse. "Hi! Hi! Hi!"

From the cedars rang the thrilling, blentling chorus of bays that told of a treed lion. The forest was almost impenetrable. We had to pick our way. Emmett forged ahead; we heard him smashing the deadwood; and soon a yell proclaimed the truth of Jones's assertion.

First I saw the men looking upward; then Moze climbing the cedar, and the other hounds with noses skyward; and last, in the dead top of the tree, a dark blot against the blue, a big tawny lion.

"Whoop!" The yell leaped past my lips. Quiet Jim was yelling and Emmett, silent man of the desert, let from his wide cavernous chest a booming roar that drowned ours.

Jones's next decisive action turned us from exultation to the grim business of the thing. He pulled Moze out of the cedar, and while he climbed up, Emmett ran his rope under the collars of all of the hounds. Quick as the idea flashed over me I leaped into the cedar adjoining the one Jones was in, and went up hand over hand. A few pulls brought me to the top, and then my blood ran hot and quick, for

yeaps, I distinguished Jones's yell. Emmett ran directly under the lion with a spread noose in his hands. Jones pulled and pulled, but the lion held on firmly. Throwing the end of the lasso down to Jim, Jones yelled again, and then they both pulled. The lion was too strong. Suddenly, however, the branch broke, letting the lion fall, kicking frantically with all four paws. Emmett grasped one of the four whipping paws, and even as the powerful animal sent him staggering he dexterously left the noose fast on the paw. Jim and Jones in unison let go of their lasso, which streaked up through the branches as the lion fell, and then it dropped to the ground, where Jim made a flying grab for it. Jones plunging out of the tree fell upon the rope at the same instant.

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This lasted for only a few seconds. They stretched the beast from tree to tree, and Jones, running with the third lasso, made fast the front paws.

"It's a female," said Jones, as the lion lay helpless, her sides swelling; "a good-sized female. She's nearly eight feet from tip to tip, but not very heavy. Hand me another rope."

When all four lassos had been stretched, the lioness could not move. Jones strapped a collar around her neck and clipped the sharp yellow claws.

"Now to muzzle her," he continued.

Jones's method of performing this most hazardous part of the work was characteristic of him. He thrust a stick between her open jaws, and when she crushed it to splinters he tied another, and yet another, until he found one that she could not break. Then while she bit on it, he placed a wire loop over her nose, slowly tightening it, leaving the stick back of her big canines.

The hounds ceased their yelping and when untied, Sounder wagged his tail as if to say, "Well done," and then lay down; Don walked within three feet of the lion, as if she were now beneath his dignity; Jude began to nurse and lick her sore paw; only Moze the incorrigible retained antipathy for the captive, and he growled, as always, low and deep. And on the moment, Ranger, dusty and lame from travel, trotted wearily into the glade and, looking at the lioness, gave one disgusted bark and flopped down.

To be continued in December Boys' LIFE

